

# *The* Commonweal

June 20, 1941

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*Liam O'Connor*

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# The COMMONWEAL

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## France and the War

SYRIA. It is clear enough that the French Army in Syria has not welcomed the invading British, Free French and Indians as liberators. The resistance it is putting up would not seem to be a mere formality. An element in the situation which if foreseen by the British was discounted—as it was at Dakar—is a permanent psychological trait in the French army. Loyalty to France rather than to any particular French régime. The fact is that the French officers and men who created the French colonial empire often disliked the French Republic and were hindered in their work by its policies. They built something and they gave it to France. Their instinct is to defend this thing they built. The men who now are defending Syria are sustained by a peculiar professional and traditional pride and sense of duty. Whatever their unhappiness at serving German interests, they cannot bring themselves to break their unquestioning allegiance to their country. The French army does not decide when and whom to fight: it obeys and serves.

"GO IN THERE AND FIGHT." The State Department has at least one settled policy: it allows no day to pass without expressing pained recognition of the acts, the possible acts, and the

possible motives of the French Government. We suppose that this moral indignation serves as a sort of setting up exercise before the day's work, and it is certain that it covers a serious attempt to bring aid to Britain. Superficially, however, it is not entirely dignified nor does it express any real awareness of the tragic French situation. Henry-Haye, the French Ambassador, was not unjustified in permitting himself a certain sarcasm in a recent reply to the Secretary of State. He did not doubt that America felt very strongly about Hitler nor that America meant all it said about all-out aid to Britain. Proof no doubt eventually would be forthcoming. But although he did so reluctantly and with some embarrassment, he felt obliged to remind Mr. Hull that the people of France had anticipated America's convictions with regard to Germany, and America's support of Britain, to the extent of fighting, and disastrously losing, a war.

It is becoming absurd and cruel to keep on talking to France as though that country—now defeated, captive and disarmed—were still a candidate for assistance under the Lend-Lease Act, and could still be mobilized for action in the front line against the totalitarians. It is time we stopped looking for soldiers to hire—urging the defeated to go in there and fight. Certainly it is with no pleasure that we feel compelled week after week to demonstrate the bitter reality of France's defeat. Here is a statement of Admiral Darlan's, painful to read but accurately descriptive of the situation: "The armistice is a suspension of hostilities under conditions fixed by the conqueror and accepted by the vanquished. . . . Since the armistice was signed by Germany and us, we have got to negotiate with Germany if we want to modify it. . . . If that atmosphere [of collaboration] cannot be created, I fear a disastrous peace for France. That fear is not founded on impression; it is founded on certainty."

Under these circumstances and so long as they continue unchanged—so long as the war against Germany is not won by Great Britain—exhortation to heroism will not solve the problem for France. Threatened by the Germans with the dismemberment of their country, starvation and a fully experimented collection of reprisals, the French must collaborate. That is the situation: there is no way out of it. Americans in making up their minds whether or not this war is "our" war, must realize finally that the French no longer are in a position to fight it for us.

## Worth a Try

STRANGE WORLD. Russia supplies Germany, Japan's ally; she also supplies China, Japan's enemy. We send China lease-lend help, and encourage oil shipments to Japan. Until not



too long ago, Germany and Italy were supplying China, even after the Tokyo-Rome-Berlin axis.

It is easy to line up the aggressors and the trespassers against. Japan, Germany, Italy are all of a pattern, and fascist. Russia is in that pattern too. Britain, ourselves, China (and a lot of governments-in-exile) are the democratic opposition. Some minds can see only one happy solution: eventual total victory, everywhere and equally, of the latter over the former. To talk of anything else is "naïve, childish, stupid, treasonable."

So any indication of a possibility of better relations between ourselves and Japan is "appeasement," Tokyo takes the place of Munich, Grew presumably becomes another Henderson, and will write a best seller; Mr. Hull needs an umbrella. Why are we so frightened of a word? Appeasement at Munich utterly sacrificed the Czechs, was a bad bargain for England and France and largely helped make possible Hitler's conquest of Europe. It was the outcome of a bluff no one wanted to call.

Is that the pattern in the Far East? The crisis there is no sudden hold-up; it has been developing for ten years. China, because of its very bulk, is no Czechoslovakia. And China elected to resist. Nor is Japan undergoing any social revolution; it has no fuhrer, no duce. Its whole national tradition is what it is. And it does need *lebensraum*. It needs places for its increasing population to emigrate to; it needs a big trading and raw materials area.

Repealing our Oriental exclusion acts would constitute no Munich. Offering Japan decent and secure trade facilities would be no Munich. Using these as a lever to effect a decent solution of the "China incident" need be no Munich. The US can't police the whole, wide, well-armed world. Peace in Asia would be good for everybody, so long as it were a just peace—or as just a peace as this world can know. And it is obviously in our interest to work for that, incessantly. It is precisely what Hitler and Stalin do not want. A strong, prosperous China and even a strong Japan are not what they really want; the proof is Russia's continuing aid to China. Yet they are precisely what we should want—so long as the strength of both is the strength of great peaceful nations and not the strength of gangsters. Peace in the Far East might easily lead to peace before our time is over; it would certainly make helpfully productive a whole area now absorbing rather than producing, and it would infinitely increase our Atlantic strength against other aggression. If it worked no one would be the loser; if it failed, it could not lose us more than we stand to lose at present.

### Defense Strikes

THE GOVERNMENT occupation of the North American Aviation factory in California is a special case. The army and the administra-

tion treated it as such, and it appears that nothing is more important to keep in mind in considering the situation than that it is a special case. The "draft property" legislation and labor relations laws must both be formulated on the basis of more far-reaching consideration and more questionable factors than came into operation in the North American case.

The output of the big airplane factory could not be dispensed with while labor and owners and government were deciding what would constitute tolerable labor relations. The level of airplane production which national policy requires is very near maximum—in fact, it is greater than present maximum. The policy of aviation development for the US receives as close to unanimous support as any policy could. Likewise at this time everyone must recognize the fundamental necessity of maintaining the authority of the government at least adequate to carry on so clear a policy as air armament. Everyone must recognize this except revolutionaries who positively want to break the framework of American social life, a policy terribly dangerous any time and now almost suicidal while so many and such baneful forces are prowling through the world seeking to put the pieces together in bad patterns.

The more strictly the country sticks to the special problem of airplane production in dealing with the North American labor situation the better it will be. Fixed bayonets are obviously not the tools to use in solving the deeper and normal social and economic problems involved in the defense strikes. (We must not forget that the strike at North American is a normal thing in our economic society.) Perhaps the economic problems can be generalized in a few headings: Levels of production, general and specific, have to be maintained above a minimum demanded by the people as a whole; the products of our economy must be distributed to individuals and classes of the people in amounts deemed adequate by the people as a whole; there must be a tolerable agreement of the proportions to be distributed to different factors of production; there must be tolerable agreement on just what different "factors of production" are legitimate.

If a business fails to solve these problems, if capital and labor disagree so that production and distribution and apportionment fail to come up to what is felt to be the margin of necessity, then the general government is certainly going to take over the job. That is true in peacetime as in war. The special problem now, and especially in the air industry, is that the governing consideration is *maximum* production. Over the long term the criterion of maximum productivity is not a satisfactory one. It is not a standard for a civilized society, particularly for a society whose technical, industrial development represents progress to the degree that it gives freedom for human develop-



ment above the material compulsions of subsistence. It is also not a standard that ought to be misused as a weapon to enforce a distribution of economic power and wealth different from that which the country thinks humanly correct. A failure to keep up top production is not a sound, long-term argument against private property, nor against labor unions and collective bargaining.

### "America First" Quotes NCWC

IN SEEKING to establish a case it is a common misdemeanor to quote as much of an important statement as supports the contention at hand, sometimes even breaking off the quotation in the middle of a sentence if the rest of it would prove embarrassing. Quoting out of context is indeed an old trick; it still works among the unwary. Strictly speaking this would hardly seem to be the case with the paragraph recently quoted by the America First Committee from a NCWC administrative board statement of April 26. The paragraph cited, far from giving an erroneous impression of the American bishops' message, embodied the very heart of that message, dealing as it did with the general objective of peace and referring to the five peace principles outlined by Pius XII. To be sure, an enumeration of those principles would have shown the difference in approach between such a world view and the narrower concern of keeping the United States out of the war. THE COMMONWEAL has more than once protested against identifying Catholicism as such with American interventionism, and now the same situation has arisen in regard to isolationism. What is curious about the latest incident is what was implied by the very fact of the America First Committee quoting and distributing part of the NCWC text. The American hierarchy surely would object to having its policy identified with that of the America First Committee. This, we would warrant, was the chief reason for the vigorous disavowal of Archbishop Mooney and Monsignor Ready of the NCWC. Devotion to the ultimate objectives of a just world peace does not *per se* serve as an endorsement of American isolationism.

### Further Thoughts on the Encyclical

WE HAVE already outlined in these columns the Pope's Pentecost message, but in an utterance of such importance, particular aspects call for repeated examination. Recalling the great principles by which Leo XIII challenged industrial civilization fifty years ago, the Holy Father's words challenge men anew in this woeful present. The papers repeat with satisfaction the Pope's strong, clear words about the "personal dignity of man" and "the inviolable rights of the human person"; they triumph in the unequivocal condemnation of "the error that the proper scope of

man on earth is society, that society is an end in itself." But while this satisfaction is just, and while it is particularly grateful to Catholics to note the widening of the general mind to the truth that the Church uniquely champions the human person, it may be doubted whether the Church's concept of that person is grasped so clearly. Man's high value in this world comes from another world—its warrant is Calvary, its proper expression is, in the Pope's words, "the fulfillment of that sum of stable duties and decisions for which he is directly responsible to his Creator." On no smaller basis than this can man's temporal importance be established; as the failure of liberalism even at its noblest attests. Meanwhile, reverting to the Pope's text, have Catholics, who cannot plead ignorance of the full significance of man, any failures to reproach themselves with? The question is unhappily self-answering. In the half-century since men's complacencies and cruelties were first agitated by Leo's words, there has perhaps been some progress toward justice; Pius XII speaks indeed with fatherly generosity of the "numerous beneficent institutions" founded in the Catholic field, the "orientation and method for social reconstruction" evident among "the children of the Church." But most of it is still to do; and for what is done, we in the United States must acknowledge the least credit of all comes to us. We have awakened the most tardily to a sense of our Catholic social duty, and perhaps still have the most to learn.

### As to Cheese—

WE HAVE 29 million more pounds of cheese than we had last year. Yet our Secretary of Agriculture urges that we add even to this output and send it all to the British. Meanwhile, in the Antipodes, the New Zealanders are straining their resources to produce 30 million pounds more than last season, and for the same purpose. Reading these things, following Mr. Wickard's demonstration that cheese is "an essential part of the British diet," one resolves to eat less cheese, as bidden, in the earnest hope of helping the British get the 33 percent increase which they are said to require. But one also wonders afresh, from this new angle, how much the war is going to revise literary allusions. Cheese! Chesterton once projected a five-volume study, "The Neglect of Cheese in European Literature." But it has never seemed to us neglected. The exotic French cheeses, the solid Dutch cheeses, the countryside cheeses of Italy, "smelling of song and sun-burnt mirth" and goats, all are part of our intimate bookish recollections, and leading the procession are the English cheeses. Not that Cheddar and Stilton are above Edam and Roquefort; but the English have always nobly celebrated food in their letters, and among their foods (as Mr. Wickard indeed re-

minds us), cheese bulks large. How many inns hidden in leafy valleys has not one (in spirit) visited to partake of bread and cheese? And now, if tons of unknown and unlettered cheeses are pouring in from abroad, will they slip into the legend like the indigenous article? Will, for instance, our sterling American "rat-trap cheese" (we believe we quote Mr. Willkie, whose favorite snack it is said to be), sound and good though it is, take its place with the ale and pilot biscuits of the great tradition? Or will the tradition vanish in the light of that yellow glare? "Stilton!" (to quote GKC once more, who admitted there might be echoes of other influence in the lines), "thou shouldst be living at this hour."

## Forum

**I** WAS TEN years old when the first World War started. I remember precious little about that conflict; but I reached intellectual maturity just in time to have a box seat at the dismal post-war drama in which the principal characters were Disillusionment, Isolationism, Noble Experiment and Materialism.

So we talked a lot about the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI. We wrote articles about them. We formed study guilds to discuss them. We distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of the encyclicals. We prayed for their miraculous translation into reality. We did everything, in short, except put them into practice for all the world to see.

But Catholic youth thought that it had done its bit. It had helped to sow the good seed of social and economic reconstruction. Catholic young people were not wealthy, neither did they grind down the faces of the poor. They controlled neither corporations nor armies. They were neither statesmen nor famous journalists. They offered the world their optimism, their enthusiasm, their zeal in God's cause. It was a generous offer; it was all that youth had to give. The modern world spat on it.

Catholic youth hated communism, national socialism and fascism. We hated the hypocritical British, French, Dutch and Belgian imperialisms. And then, when World War II started, we were told that the spotless and stainless democracies were engaged in a holy and sacred crusade in defense of Christianity, civilization, democracy, justice, honor, truth and the elemental decencies of human existence. It was just a bit too much. Catholic youth vomited.

When our young people recovered from this acute attack of nausea, it was only to direct against the embattled European democracies a stream of vituperation that for depth of feeling has no counterpart in modern polemics. We said that this was a war against anti-Christ; but we promptly

added that we were not quite sure whether anti-Christ was dressed in a brown shirt or had merely exchanged a walking stick for an umbrella. It didn't help matters to be taunted with being nazi sympathizers. To be accused unjustly was all of a piece with the dishonesty, injustice and hypocrisy that had made a second world war inevitable.

"Let the gangsters fight it out," we cried. "It is no concern of ours. A plague on both camps. Three cheers for Lindbergh!"

As the war progressed, it quickly became apparent that our own nation was suffering from the very same moral imperfections that had brought about the European tragedy. There was, for example, a great deal of confusion regarding the number of planes on hand and "on order." A distinction was made between oratory and "campaign oratory." National defense somehow did not mean the defense of the United States and its possessions. It meant the defense of the British Empire and of certain countries which, by some strange and wonderful alchemy, suddenly assumed the guise and lineaments of democracy. Politicians, farmers, capitalists and labor unions at once exploited the national emergency to advance their own selfish ambitions. Our democratic way of life was lauded to the skies in public; but the sabotage of democracy continued unabated behind the scenes. Certain pressure groups demanded our immediate entrance into the conflict; other pressure groups insisted that the United States was almost totally unprepared for war. The unity of the nation was destroyed by a conspiracy against truth.

I must confess that for several months, utterly depressed by developments abroad and at home, I did a shameful thing. I turned my back on the world. I had been so completely hypnotized by evil that I failed to see virtue anywhere. News-reels, morning and evening newspapers, books, magazines, pamphlets, the radio—all carried tales of extraordinary barbarism and chicanery. For months, and even for years, my mind had been filled with accounts of grim and awful horror—famine, war, persecution, concentration camps, air bombardment of civilian populations, treason, the rapid crumbling of the moral foundations of our entire social order, the fear, agony and uncertainty that accompany the convulsive and cataclysmic passing of an epoch in history. I saw nothing but evil; heard nothing but evil; could scarcely think of anything else but man's inhumanity to man.

During these gloomy and unhappy days I happened to pick up a small book entitled "Radiating Christ." The author was the famous French Jesuit, Raoul Plus. On the very first page I read that "to be another Christ is the whole meaning of Christianity. To radiate Christ is the whole meaning of the Christian apostolate." It soon became clear to me that the logical conclusion of my



philosophy of rejection, denial and despair was intellectual and moral suicide.

Yet what most impressed me in Father Plus's little book was the optimistic message that Christ had given the world a fool-proof method of social reconstruction. Our present plight, I reflected, was not as bad as I had imagined. There was hope for the future. All that was necessary was to put into practice Christ's own technique. We would then be able to have the kind of world we all ardently desire. A Christian revolution—the restoration of all things in Christ—was no pipe-dream but a very sane and practical business. Here is the four-point program: prayer, propagation of the faith by word and particularly by example, the acceptance of the Cross, humility.

The lay apostle must be a man of prayer because he wants to communicate to his neighbors something divine; and the essence of all supernatural work is that every apostle be an instrument united to God. Secondly, the truth must be made visible, lovable and admirable by showing forth Christ in word and deed twenty-four hours a day, sixty minutes an hour, sixty seconds every minute. Thirdly, souls are won by words and by example; but above all they are won by sacrifice—by penance, mortification, self-conquest. The salvation of the modern world belongs to the crucified. Finally, the lay apostle must be willing to disappear behind the Master Whom he preaches.

If our young people apply the measuring rod of Christian principles exclusively to contemporary governments and parties, and do nothing else, they will certainly go crazy. If the application is made only to those Christians who preach what they do not practice, the result will be the same. But if these young people will study and meditate upon the life of Christ, and then honestly evaluate their own shortcomings, they may become saints. Their nihilistic anger and scorn, which they have hitherto directed against others, will then be directed against themselves and will become a source of good rather than evil. Before they complain of hypocrisy in others, let them first fight to rid themselves of its least stain.

"The time is past," writes Mauriac, "when men could profess principles at variance with their conduct. How many there were who used to try to reconcile the love of Catholicism with the anarchy of the soul! Our salvation lies in the fact that young people have now come to understand what is required of them in the secret recesses of their hearts, if their public life is to bear fruit."

And so I have come to accept many of the views of Dr. Bell and Dr. Agar. Western civilization, as we know it, is faced with destruction. Despite the enormous difficulties in the way, we must save its life in order to gain the chance to do a better job. Our world has been weak, evil and hypocritical in many ways, and entirely selfish. Granted

all that. But neither as Christians nor as Americans is it permitted us to fold our hands and permit it to die without an effort. We have a double fight: to save our world and to Christianize it.

This means, so far as I am concerned, that I must abandon Charles A. Lindbergh's philosophy of isolationism because I can no longer in conscience support it. Fertile mission territories in Africa and the Far East have been cut off from the hitherto generous support of the 200,000,000 Catholics in the Christian nations of Europe. I cannot hope to become another Christ, to radiate Christ, if through selfishness or miserliness I abandon Christ's present-day apostles and martyrs.

For a long time I was of the opinion that there was scarcely any difference between nazism and that grisly caricature of Christian civilization which existed in Europe before the war. One was the logical result of the other. To defeat nazism would merely mean to put back in place and power all those anti-Christian forces which had prepared the way for the present débâcle and, if given the opportunity, would prepare the way for still another world catastrophe twenty years hence. I now realize, however, that we are faced with the death of the civilization which we Catholics created in Europe and which we have at least leavened for the past two thousand years. I have no illusions about Britain. No person of Irish descent has any illusions about Britain. Yet a British victory would give Europe another chance to find its soul. I want Britain and Europe to have that chance. I want Britain to win.

Since I want Britain to win, how far am I willing to go to help her? The question at issue today is not whether we should aid Britain by every means in our power short of war, but whether we should enter the war now. This question caused me infinite distress. I myself have reached the conclusion that, for the good of Christianity and of humanity as a whole, we should stay out. Friends of mine have come to the conclusion that we should become active belligerents at once. All of us are praying every day for peace. We want to do the will of God. Yet we disagree.

There are Catholic interventionists and Catholic isolationists. I believe today that the job of Catholics is to go all-out in support of the movement to which they have given their allegiance. Assuming always the absolute supremacy of conscience, they should strive ceaselessly to Christianize the movement with which they are affiliated. Every front is a Catholic front. If we will exert ourselves to the utmost, I am confident that Christ will accept our good will and good intentions and utilize them, in His own good time and in His own way, to achieve a good result that will be beneficial both to interventionists and isolationists. The cardinal sin today is indifference.

JOHN J. O'CONNOR.



# Truth in Propaganda

Is the propagandist necessary? Can the educator and the propagandist work together? Should the propagandist become a poet?

By Liam O'Connor

ACCORDING to a recent Gallup poll, eighty-two percent of the people in this country believe that the United States will enter the war. This anticipation has not yet aroused us to adequate preparation. There is, as *The New Republic* points out, widespread bewilderment, apathy, paralysis of will. The disquieting truth is that we face the prospect of war in a condition of low morale. *The Nation* puts it bluntly: "To be confused is to be weak. To be weak is to be lost."

No one cause can be blamed for this condition. The notion that war is never justified was planted deeply in many minds by belligerent pacifists. The isolationists are now urging us to retire into a schizophrenic reverie and to forget that a man called Hitler is prowling about the walls of our asylum. Those who worked for great social and economic reforms fear that their hopes may be destroyed in the turmoil of war. And many who have been disillusioned by the lies of propagandists have a cynical scepticism for the channels of communication themselves; they are unwilling to believe what they read in the newspaper, what they see in the newsreel, what they hear on the radio.

Clearly, such an attitude of intellectual nihilism deserves particular attention. A man who is committed to a false belief may be induced to change his mind. One who is determined to believe nothing he is told, and who persists in that determination, cannot be reached by any appeal. If such an attitude were sufficiently widespread, it could sabotage the most energetic efforts to unify thought and action in a period of grave national danger. When the people are unwilling to believe, there can be no common mind; without such a common mind, there can be no effective social action. It is imperative then, that propagandists realize that the spreading of falsehood destroys the market for their wares. Let them remember the bit of folklore about the boy who cried "Wolf!" once too often, and who found no one to listen to him when he belatedly told the truth. Let them reconsider their basic conceptions of propaganda work while there is still time, and boldly reject the apparent advantages of falsehood.

In a number of books published shortly after the first World War it was revealed that propagandists had had scant respect for the truth; it

was admitted that some of the atrocity stories about tortured civilians, raped women and mutilated children had been deliberately conjured out of the imaginations of propagandists, and skilfully disseminated. For this material there was a large public, a public, as Lasswell wrote in 1927, "puzzled, uneasy, or vexed at the unknown cunning which seems to have duped and degraded them," and anxious "to have the thing explained."

In 1937 the Institute for Propaganda Analysis was founded. Its purpose is "to analyze the propagandas of today and to formulate methods whereby American citizens can make their own analyses of 'attempts to persuade them to do something that they might not do if they were given all of the facts.'" This organization issues monthly newsletters for use with high school and college students and various adult groups; its essential purpose, apparently, is to make every man his own propaganda-exterminator. The radio audience, too, has been reached by the *Town Meeting of the Air* program on propaganda methods. In short, these anti-propaganda forces have made vocal the sense of moral outrage of the generation that was deceived during 1914-1918; they have been reminding the middle-aged and proving to the young that the propagandist is a modern equivalent of the Devil. Unlike the latter, however, the propagandist does not go roaring through the world seeking whom he may devour. He treads softly on rubber heels, and he works on a noiseless typewriter. But his aim, we are warned, is to invade every mind and heart, to poison every action. He has usurped the throne of the Father of Lies; he wears the mantle of the Prince of Darkness. Against him no precaution is too great, no scepticism too adamant.

The propagandist has not concealed his low opinion of the public mind. But it is one thing to describe the shortcomings of popular thinking; it is something else to take those shortcomings as conditions to be maintained or even intensified by the government in power. Hitler, for example, writes in "Mein Kampf": "The intelligence of the masses is small, their forgetfulness is great. . . . Since the masses are slow to comprehend, they must be told the same thing a thousand times." Dr. Goebbels agrees with his chief: "The ordinary man hates nothing more than two-sidedness, to be

called upon to consider this as well as that. The masses think simply and primitively." Avoidance of argument and mere repetition may be useful upon occasion; they may even be necessary. But to advocate without reservation this treatment as the best that can be given, to deny the common man such a measure of rational thinking as he has capacity for, is pernicious. No person and no group can licitly deprive anyone of the right to intellectual development. Every man is entitled to as much light as he can achieve.

In the sixteenth century Montaigne believed that men would never free themselves from the superstitions of witchcraft. In a certain case of alleged witchcraft, he pointed out, learned men had pondered the evidence for six weeks; they then decided that the old woman accused had actually changed herself into a fox in order to steal chickens. If the learned could be so deceived, how, Montaigne demanded, could the unlettered ever free themselves from these errors? The fact is that such an emancipation has taken place; it may largely be ascribed, as Angell says, to the fact that the public has been taught the need for certain "conditions of truth" such as "the demand for evidence, an objective attitude, the application of the inductive method, the liberation from pre-existing prejudices." Since Montaigne's day the level of popular sentiment and thought has undergone slow but momentous changes. The common man of today has not been transformed into a superman by any means, but it is certain that he is far better informed and far more desirous of rational thought than the common man of the sixteenth century.

#### *Propagandists needed*

To maintain the gains already made the services of both the propagandist and the formal educator are needed. In a democratic state the propagandist's chief utility is in time of war; the educator's, in peace. The highest task of the propagandist is, in time of confusion and danger, to mobilize the group for its own protection and for the safeguarding of its culture and civilization. Prolonged discussion then is out of the question; speed is essential. The educator is charged with the conservation of the social heritage and, so far as may be, with its enrichment. But there is no sharp line of demarcation of activities. As already said, the propagandist will have functions to carry on in the peace-time society which is not composed exclusively of characters from an H. G. Wells novel. And the educator has vital duties in days of war. It is his to see to it that a climate of opinion exists which will be favorable to the preservation of the best products of the human spirit, whether victory or defeat or stalemate be the issue. Now that we stand, it may be, on the threshold of war or of prolonged siege, it would

be well for the propagandist and the educator to reconcile their differences, to recognize their respective rights and duties, and to work together in harmony.

The major point of conflict between propagandist and educator, as already noted, is the penchant of the propagandist for falsehood. In 1928, Sir Arthur Ponsonby blandly declared that "Falsehood is a recognized and extremely useful weapon in warfare, and every country uses it quite deliberately to deceive its own people, to attract neutrals and to mislead the enemy." Propagandists of today have had cause to reconsider the expediency of falsehood. They have seen how the duped can react from irrational credulity to equally irrational scepticism. Robbed of faith in his leaders, many a man in the street decided that he would play safe and commit himself to nothing; his stock reply to a variety of appeals has been the "wise guy's" mocking "Oh, yeah?" That it is exceedingly difficult if not impossible to break down such negativism, the more enlightened advertisers know very well. They realize that it is far better to prevent the problem arising by avoiding altogether the practices once inspired by the maxim, "Let the buyer beware." They have consequently advocated and enforced an ethical code of "truth in advertising." The absence in the present war so far of many crude atrocity stories suggests that propagandists also recognize in some degree the need for a code of professional ethics in propaganda. But it is only a partial recognition. In "Science in War," a book by a group of anonymous writers, published in England in 1940, this statement is made: "However much we may dislike . . . the element of duping in propaganda, [this] . . . cannot be avoided, any more than can rifles, unpleasant as they are, once we have gone to war." This statement is in serious need of clarification.

#### *The rationale of duping*

A person can be duped in more than one way. The simplest method is by the deliberate falsehood, as in the notorious tales of atrocity. No one can seriously maintain that the propagandist is unable to avoid barefaced lying, especially when he knows that it is liable ultimately to deprive him of public confidence and influence. For his own preservation and for the common interest, he must avoid such lurid and ineffective procedures. He may even with profit go to the other extreme; he may follow a policy of exposing certain myths and legends. These are spontaneously generated by both primitive and advanced societies. As Arnold has shown, we have a rich folklore of economic processes; we are well provided also with a folklore of racial groups, national heroes and national villains. Under the strain of war, quite fantastic beliefs may be fabricated by the people themselves, a myth of one's own invincibility, per-



haps, or a legend about the infallibility of a national hero. Such pleasant items of folklore may be destroyed by the brutal logic of events, with deplorable consequences for morale. Foreseeing this eventuality, the propagandist can remove or modify the collective delusion before it is too late.

Duping by partial truths is inevitable, but this duping is not peculiar to war. It is true to say that it cannot be avoided in war, but it cannot be avoided in peace either. To tell the whole truth about anything is impossible, the philosophers have insisted, because no one knows the whole truth about anything whatever. In spite of the optimism of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis, no human mind has, or can obtain, "all of the facts." From a more practical point of view, it is evident that frequently one cannot reveal all that one does know. A statesman may jeopardize a much-needed reform by antagonizing several factions with a candid but tactless speech. Socrates's remark to the effect that no man could be a public official in Athens and tell the truth is applicable, in this sense, to every holder of public office. President Hutchins of Chicago has recently made substantially the same comment about college presidents. The successful leader is compelled to deal in partial truths, not only because of his own limitations with respect to perfect knowledge, but because of the limitations of his followers as well; he must omit what will lead to useless and perhaps dangerous confusion of mind; he must select what is intelligible and capable of concrete application.

Truths may be more or less partial, of course, and they may be used with the intention of informing or of deceiving. No matter how partial the material available for use may be, it should be employed honestly with the desire to reveal truth, and the public should be aware that this is the controlling purpose. The impression should never be made that the authorities are primarily anxious to economize the truth. George Creel, censor in the last war, has just pleaded in *Collier's* for abolishing the voluntary censorship of the press recently requested and set up by the Secretary of the Navy. His contention is that whatever censorship is necessary should first be applied to the source of information, and then to the cables and radio stations that might be used to transmit information abroad. Newspaper censorship, he says, is not very efficient at best, it attracts attention and creates an atmosphere of resentment that impairs confidence. The present writer had an opportunity to observe the truth of this in Paris on September 1, 1939. On that day, when Hitler's campaign in Poland was beginning, newspapers appeared with glaring white space in the columns where the censor had done his work. Some of these spaces were embellished with little cartoons of the censor as a prying old woman

equipped with a needle-nose and a huge pair of scissors. Even the crossword puzzles were sacrificed. The concierge in my hotel, an inveterate crossword addict, made no secret of his feelings on the matter. "No crossword," he growled, jabbing an indignant finger at the sketch of a smirking censor where the puzzle should have been. "The crossword of course is a powerful instrument in the hands of the enemies of the people of France. Who can doubt it? It is the arsenal of the dealer in codes and ciphers. Obviously." Then he closed one eye and spat out a single word. "Pfui!"

Between fabrication at one end of the scale and suppression of information at the other end lies the domain of distortion. Exaggeration of the truth approaches falsehood as a limit; the limit of minimizing the truth is complete censorship. A certain amount of distortion is unconscious and inevitable. Truth is not gained by a merely passive receiving of stimulation, as a lump of putty takes the impression of a finger. Rather, it is a result of the interaction of the objective and subjective worlds. Since each individual actively uses his past experience in acquiring truth, it follows that the total knowledge gained of a given situation by any two individuals will not be identical, for each brings a different totality of experience to bear upon that situation. In other words, the prejudgments of a man, rationally well-founded or not, operate to emphasize some facts or generalizations more than others, and to minimize other facts and generalizations.

These processes of emphasizing or minimizing become conscious when one appeals to varied types of mentality. In order to make his material intelligible and interesting, the speaker or writer must consider whether his public be young or old, male or female, rich or poor, highbrow or lowbrow, radical or conservative; the same facts may be presented to the readers of the *American Journal of Psychology* and to the readers of *Good Housekeeping*, but the treatment of the facts in each instance will necessarily be different.

#### *When is distortion a lie?*

Whether the distortion involved in such conscious playing up or toning down of aspects of truth constitute a lie in a particular case is a question for the casuist. In general it can be said that when the intention of the propagandist is to propagate what he does not believe and thereby to deceive, he is certainly lying. It may be added that it will do him no good with the general public to be able to prove by subtle argument that what seems to be a lie is in reality only a refined truth. The tendency of the common man is to be a rigorist; black is to him jet black, and white is pure white. As Ambrose put it, "it hath not pleased the Lord to give his people salvation in dialectic."



In dealing with these dangerous matters, the propagandist needs a moral equivalent for falsehood. I suggest that he can find it by altering somewhat his conception of his nature. So far he has considered himself largely a dealer in news, a specialized reporter of what has happened or of what is happening. This function he cannot give up. But he can add to it; he can become a dealer in the future. The Homeric bards, the Irish minstrels, story-tellers of many a time and place, did both. They spoke of famous men, of the great deeds they had performed and of matters of the present hour. But their eyes were on days to come also; Virgil's *Aeneid* is no mere history, but a monument to the future splendor of Rome. The propagandist should do likewise, and for this reason: it is impossible to lie about the future as such. Hope lies outside the field of logic. When hard pressed to make an adequate impression with the simple truth, he can escape into the realm of what may someday be; in that delightful country he can give his poetic imagination free reign and the public will not object to his poetic license.

In certain quarters there has been great hesitancy about stating war aims. There has been talk of the complexity of the present situation and of the hazards of making promises or predictions. The result has been to increase public confusion and suspicion. But war aims need not be put in specific categorical terms. Every man wishes to preserve a way of life which he has found good; if that way of life be depicted by the poet and projected into the future, it will serve, once we are embroiled in war, as a goal for which to fight or, if necessary, to die. Here a pinch of poetic inspiration is worth a pound of dogmatism.

One thing must never be forgotten: the man who would mould belief and direct action must have the confidence of those whom he wishes to lead. The propagandist has impaired and all but lost that confidence. Yet it is not impossible for him to regain it. He can do so if he will make it unmistakably evident that he is worthy of trust. The price of confidence is a reputation for veracity.

## What Can Decentralism Do?

By LEO R. WARD

IT IS sometimes said that the decentralists claim too much. They talk, but they don't produce or do. Then they also have within what we may regard as their body some faddists and sentimentalists. Yet the persons meeting in Chicago on May 17 and 18 appeared by and large to be fairly mature and real. Among them were the following, all of whom have stuck to their decentralism

through the hard times, and most of them in a practical and rather thorough way: Monsignor Ligutti of Iowa, Arthur E. Morgan who once was head of TVA, Ralph Borsodi and Ralph Templin of the School of Living, Don Smucker who more than any other saw the meeting through, Henry C. Taylor of the Farm Foundation, Seward Collins, Willis Nutting and Elizabeth Nutting, Baker Brownell of Northwestern, Benjamin Muse, and from St. John's in Minnesota, so well known for devotion to this cause, Emerson Hynes and Father Martin Schirber. The women of the Grail also came and took notes on everything, happy to have an introduction to the live problems which they think it their task to help us meet. Students came from half a dozen of the local and semi-local colleges.

Mr. Morgan appears to be just the same in discussion as in reading a paper, since he goes ahead with his facts and logic no matter who demurs. Yet it was he who repeatedly set the basic problems. In our ordinary heterogeneous villages, settlements and cities, what common ground can we find for unity in action? A Catholic community or a Mormon town already has the deepest bond of unity, but as a rule we have great division in beliefs and affiliations. Can we not get and must we not get—Mr. Morgan was eventually asking, almost in Maritain's terms—a unity of aim, in spite of a diversity of creed and race and nation? Then Mr. Morgan was asking, just as did Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*, may we expect to have a society so long as we have merely individuals and individualism on the one side and merely the state and statism on the other? Are we, he asked, to have no groups in between? (One would like to know in passing what our Catholics have done relative to that real problem outlined by Pius XI.) Besides, are people ever to hope for a sheer decentralism, no centralization at all left any more? Surely this thought would be foolish, since even cooperation—so highly approved in general by this group—supposes some centralizing.

The common supposition was that the process is to be democratic, ever so much more democratic than we are used to, for the reason that it is to be by the people and up from the people. But then Secretary Bowen of the Cooperative League pointed out that for cooperators at any rate some of the action has to be by edict from the top down: it is not practical to start police protection or a fire department little by little and as the people here and there choose to have it.

Somewhat in this connection, Mr. Morgan was always raising another question. The folkways are dictatorial, and may never be disqualified or disallowed, at least if we believe in democracy and man and if we would not tear down by some cheap bit of abrupt planning the graces and morals that may have taken centuries to build. We have new

and properly modern good things, such as a spirit of inquiry, a wide range of experience, and a certain versatility. How are we to assimilate these, without breaking or jarring the more elemental goods given us in the folkways?

Mr. Borsodi said very well that we have too much centralization of persons, e.g. in Chicago, and of production and industry and finance and politics, and he suggested how industry could readily be decentralized, with the other factors then following suit. Some one repeated the saying that Chicago and New York are our two biggest mistakes. But Mr. Morgan's position was more fundamental. The vast city, he noted, is a relatively modern phenomenon; during most of the existence of the race men have lived in little groups, each of these a social organism, everybody aware of what was expected of him, nobody able to get by with mere appearances, and the chief marks of the group were "friendliness, co-operation and neighborliness." And even now the residue of these social values keeps us going, and in Chicago a person soon looks for a group that simulates the earlier organic condition; he joins a labor union, the Rotarians, a church; but these touch life only at a point, and all of them together fail to give us an organic effect.

How then in these times are we to have life whole and organic, and not hopelessly atomized? And how is life, in an age of effective technology, to remain personalistic and not go mechanistic? How could we, as at once against individualism and statism, have some of the corporate life urged by Pius XI, and follow his "fundamental principle of social philosophy," never recurring to a bigger body if the smaller one can do the work?

The decentralists, it may be said, give something of a constructive reply to all these questions. Monsignor Ligutti's fifty families have begun these seven or eight years to form a community, to use the machine for persons, and to get rid at once of statism and the old individualism. So has a notable percentage of the people in Nova Scotia, in a variety of occupations. So, it would seem, have Mr. Muse's people in Virginia, and many other little groups.

For several years, we have had an evident decentralist movement. People have fled from the big cities, and landed outside. Most of them do bits of gardening and carpentering, and they begin to have neighbors and to live again in something like normal human relationships. Outside Chicago are thousands, and though we don't yet know in detail the selfish and unsocial reasons they may have had for migrating, we know that they are already forming personal and responsible communities.

Some take to part-time farming. Dr. Taylor reports that by 1935 we had 350,000 of these part-time farmers, and perhaps we have twice as

many now. Not all of them, even with the work and sacrifice they endure, can make a success of it; and studies show that the average net gain each year is only about one hundred and seventy dollars a family. Yet even this item is not negligible for families that are on the verge of suffering, and when this is added to the gain in personalistic and neighborly living and to the psychological gain in security and hope and also in the health maintained or won for young and old, the result is tremendous. What we must not do, of course, is to suppose that the gain, whatever it may be, is easily had.

Part of the gain then is in the line of economic goods, and part of it in terms of more intimate human values. A good deal has been lost, and the question now, as Dr. Taylor said, is whether we can get these life-values back: that is the reason for decentralism. But at the same time a remnant, to say the least, has never been centralized; a vast amount of home production is still carried on, even in the biggest cities; Vermont woodworkers have refused to be commercialized; gardening is also common, and though it has suffered, especially in the richer parts of the richer states, non-commercialized farming still exists: as real a problem as any is the reviving of this idea.

Decentralism might go a little way toward the freeing of persons, as was often said in these sessions, and allow man the chance to be what we think he is meant to be. It might do something to cushion the economic and political shock that we may reasonably expect within a few years. But would it win world wars and settle all industrial and agricultural unrests? Probably not; it would neither provoke nor decide wars, or take people by force and solve all their difficulties. Still we know from cases that people are not necessarily helpless, bound hand and foot. In Nova Scotia for example and at Granger in Iowa and at Grand Island in Nebraska local men have done wonders in facing their own problems, and what they have done it is likely that others could do. "The place to start is your own neighborhood."

## *Views & Reviews*

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

EUGENE BAGGER has joined the great and ever-growing body of writers of books about the war and the world revolution of which the war is but one manifestation—and possibly not even its worst or most destructive one, for it may well be that the terrific moral collapse and the contagious sort of mental confusion which so obviously are afflicting humanity may well prove to be a worse disaster than all the results of the actual fighting, horrible as these are. Like so many of the war-book writers, Mr. Bagger is a journalist, or rather he was at one time a journalist, specializing in international affairs;



one to whom the European capitals were thoroughly familiar. For although he is an American citizen, he was born and was educated in Hungary, and possessed, like most other educated Europeans, an acquaintance with the languages and the history of that dolorous part of the world not often possessed by most American foreign correspondents—particularly those attached to the popular press, who made Europe of late years their unhappy hunting ground for sensations and that mass of deceptive "inside stuff" which has so largely befuddled their stay-at-home readers, even if it made the sale of their articles and books so lucrative. Mr. Bagger's book is entitled, "For the Heathen Are Wrong." (Little Brown. Boston. \$3.00)

But Eugene Bagger gave up journalism some years ago, and for a number of years deliberately absented himself from all the works and ways of journalism, residing in various retired country places in Italy and France, mainly in France, while devoting himself assiduously to studies in psychology, history and philosophy in preparation for a book on such subjects, which, we are told, has been written, and which, let us hope, may soon be published. It is not likely that it will prove a lucrative undertaking, but from the glimpses of it which his autobiographical account of his experiences while writing it afford, it should be a valuable book.

In his boyhood in Hungary, he tells us, without going into the matter very fully, he became a Catholic. His father, a Jew without religion, made no objection, let him do as he pleased; but almost as rapidly as he had forced his way into the Church, he seems to have dropped away from it, without, however, becoming inimical to its teachings or its professors. Freud and Adler gave him what he for a long time considered a superior explanation of the mysteries of life to that given by the Church. During those years of the obscuration of his faith, he lived and worked in London, Copenhagen, New York and the Middle West, and back and forth in Europe. The main interest of the highly unconventional account of his life provided in his book will be found by Catholics, naturally, to revolve about his discursive yet profound account of his reconversion to the Faith. For readers in general, probably, the greatest interest of the story of personal experiences, which illustrate and at times illuminate the deeper story of the development of a soul, will be centered about his account of the fall of France before the Nazi invasion.

How far Mr. Bagger is from the point of view of most "foreign correspondents" in composing their despatches, radio talks, lectures or books, may be found in a remark made early in the book: "The question that I am interested in, above all, is this: What is it that makes things such as happened in France within the last ten months happen all over again in the course of centuries? . . . Is it some blind fatality, some cycle of the unknowing and unfeeling forces in our blood, as Spengler asserts? It is questions such as these that I have sought to answer, to the best of my ability; and though it would be ridiculous for me to try to squeeze my conclusions, that is to say, the gist of this book, into a sentence or two of the first chapter, I want to state here and now that I consider the answers proffered by Spengler, and by all other fatalists, naturalists and

materialists, wholly false. The view that I shall suggest in these pages is that history is made and unmade by the free mind of man, who passes in this manner through the ordeal imposed on him by an omnipotent, omniscient and all-good transcendent God. Some day I intend to write another book to demonstrate this view, but in these pages I merely propose to throw it at the reader; he may take it or leave it." Wise readers will encourage Mr. Bagger to give them that promised book by responding in reasonable numbers to the present fascinating introduction.

## Communications

### THE NEW FRENCH RÉGIME

(On March 7, 1941, THE COMMONWEAL published an article by Professor Louis J. A. Mercier of Harvard University entitled, "The New French Régime." On April 4 Professor Yves Simon of Notre Dame University replied to Professor Mercier, taking an almost opposite attitude. In the last days of May THE COMMONWEAL received the letter, printed herewith, written in non-occupied France and dated April 22. The identity of the author is unknown. In addition to withholding his name for obvious reasons, he has also written in a mixture of French and English. It may interest readers to see a specimen of this extraordinary style before translation: "Le Régime Pétain recrute une petite armée de métier, mais prétend lui donner comme idéal la grandeur de la patrie française; résultat: the well-known Saint-Cyr school (the French West-Point), now repliée à Aix-en-Provence, has adopted for chant de ralliement a ballad popular between 1871 et 1914 *Ils n'auront pas l'Alsace et la Lorraine*, and our cadets boldly sang it, recently, en présence de délégués de la commission d'armistice allemande venus inspecter leur école." Judging from the condition of the manuscript the article has not been censored or tampered with in any way.—The Editors.)

I HAVE no idea what impression Professor Louis J. A. Mercier's article, "The New French Régime," published in THE COMMONWEAL for March 7, can have made on an American reader. Read in France, it conveyed a rather painful impression.

I shall waste no time discussing the legitimacy of the Pétain government. Of course it is entirely legal, established by means of a perfectly regular vote of the so-called National Assembly, a joint session of the two Chambers, legally invested with constitutional power. But we may ask ourselves how many of the 569 Senators and Deputies who voted for the abolition of the Third Republic were persuaded in their hearts of the goodness of the position they were publicly taking. Before accusing them of hypocrisy and weakness the American public should bear in mind that this vote took place in a city only a few minutes distant from the German front line: the freedom of a legislative body holding its deliberations with Panzer divisions looking on is a very relative freedom!

I shall limit myself strictly to the facts of the situation. For a real Pétain régime to exist (and this is all the more



true if this régime sets itself up as being authoritarian) it would be necessary that the Pétain government possess and be able to exercise freely full and complete power over the lands, territories and inhabitants of France. But what is actually the case?

1. The mastery of the seas being in the hands of England, Vichy has only a precarious authority over French territories beyond the seas.

2. The 2,000,000 prisoners of war still in German hands are beyond Vichy's power and constitute in the hands of our enemies a hostage whose value for purposes of blackmail we daily measure.

3. The three departments forming Alsace-Lorraine, with a population in normal times of 1,500,000, have already been torn away from the French State; at the end of December, 1940, the frontier of the Reich was officially and administratively re-established along the frontier of 1914. Alsace is joined to Baden; the Moselle region in Lorraine together with the Sarre and the Palatinate constitute a so-called Westmark (just as the former "Oesterreich" is now an Oestmark).

4. The Vichy general delegate for the occupied zone, M. de Brinon, has the rank and title of ambassador: for the Pétain régime, Paris is a foreign city. The actions and decisions of the Vichy government apply in the occupied zone only to the extent that German authority permits. In the occupied zone the Pétain government is not obeyed, nor is its chief respected. The German-controlled Paris press continually prints attacks against the Marshal. Nazi-fostered movements and groups are being organized to clear the way for the establishment of a true totalitarian régime, vassal of Germany.

5. Finally, in what Paris people call the *Nono-zone* (*Non-occupied zone*), the authority of the Pétain government is strictly subordinate to the desires of the Germans. Even its legislative measures must be submitted for approval to the Armistice Commission at Wiesbaden. Thus, a bill reorganizing the relations between capital and labor on a corporative basis, prepared by the Minister of Labor Belin, himself a former labor leader, was quashed by the veto of Wiesbaden. We who live in this free zone daily witness the interference of the German and the Italian authorities in the government of our country. If we are starving, for it is true that we are beginning to starve, it is because the representatives of the Armistice Commission are seizing, in order to send them to the enemy, all our reserves, our current production, and that which reaches us from overseas. I bear witness that this is true and not British or de Gaulle propaganda.

Under such circumstances, it seems slightly useless to speculate on the "social realism" and other qualities of the Pétain policy. So this is a new régime? A national Revolution? On paper, it is! We who are living in its midst are aware of its provisional and superficial character. To establish a régime, the Pétain government would have to be master of its own future, hold the future of the country in its hands.

The fundamental fact to which we are forever pulled back, is that the war is not over. Germany has not yet won the war, and she knows it. We are still at war with

Germany. The Armistice is not the peace. Because Germany is not yet victorious she does not even dare tell us the terms of the peace which she would impose upon us. This every Frenchman knows and the men of Vichy first of all, that the day on which Germany is victorious, the Pétain government, with all its "social realism," and other beauties, will melt away like snow under the spring sunshine. Not only would Germany keep Alsace-Lorraine but all the rich regions of the north and east of France would be torn away from our country in order to constitute with Belgium the protectorates of Flanders and Lorraine-Burgundy—after the model of Bohemia-Moravia—and the rest of independent France would be reduced to a state of vassalage comparable to that of Slovakia, or if you prefer, to that of Mussolini's Italy. If this does not happen, if the Anglo-Saxon democracies win, well, we'll look for the 569 deputies and senators of the July 11, 1940 vote . . . and there will not be 569 people in all France—let alone senators and deputies—still favoring the Armistice régime. . . .

The Vichy revolution wants to be a *national* revolution. I must underline the fundamental absurdity of attempting a national revolution, of establishing a nationalism, which at the same time finds itself forced to practice, and even to extol, collaboration with the (provisionally) victorious exploiting and persecuting enemy. To the very extent that Pétain's propaganda succeeds in increasing among French people the feeling of national honor, of the national ideal, it works to undermine its own authority, and it works for free France, for De Gaulle today, for those, whoever they may be, who may conduct the war of liberation and revenge tomorrow. The Pétain régime stands self-condemned by the constant appeal it makes to the honor of the nation. For us Frenchmen, national honor consists in demanding the liberation of our 2,000,000 prisoners, the right to see the tricolor flag freely flying over the whole extent of our territory, and the enemy beyond our frontier, our true frontier, the other side of Metz and Strasbourg.

The Pétain régime is building up a small professional army, and asserts that it is instilling in this army as its ideal the greatness of the French people. And what is the result? The famous school of Saint-Cyr (the French West Point) now reestablished at Aix-en-Provence, has adopted as its rallying cry a ballad popular between 1871 and 1914, "Ils n'auront pas L'Alsace et la Lorraine," and our cadets boldly sang it, recently, in the presence of delegates of the German Armistice Commission who had come to inspect their school.

Such is the true situation of the Vichy government. Caught between the German demands and the silent but unanimous, firm and inexhaustible resistance of a people as deeply established in its faith in itself as is the French people, the so-called new régime has no real authority and cannot act deeply, and well it knows it. Hence its timidity, its perpetual withdrawals. A week or so ago it was announced that a bust of Marshal Pétain was to replace, in the schools and the homes of our villages, the traditional bust of Marianne, the personification of the Republic. A few days later the project was officially abandoned. The

very word, Republic—much more the thing—has still too much power over the hearts of Frenchmen. A mere plaster bust was too much to overthrow, and the new régime yielded.

Actually, this supposed régime has only two kinds of followers. First, there are the fools, for even among such witty people as the French, there must be some fools: they are like the piece of lemon rind squeezed over the top of a cocktail. I number among these the ghosts of the old Right, Maurras's *Action Française* and so forth, who, inspired by the accumulated resentment of fifty years of continuous defeat in the political arena see in the present catastrophe nothing more than the revenge they can take against their former successful political adversaries. Secondly, there are the rascals, for alas, there are always the rascals—those who see in the assumption of power, or in treason paid for by Germany, a means to fill their pockets.

The number of all these is small. The Vichy government cannot even enlist enough supporters for the mechanism of government. Its bureaucracy, its government offices, are full of men who do not conceal their faith in English victory and in revenge. Vichy undertook to replace our parliament by a consultative council, and never dared bring it together, for they know that it is impossible to gather together 200 Frenchmen willing to applaud collaboration with Germany.

Frenchmen as a whole have respect for Marshal Pétain (chiefly since he ousted Laval; up until that time he had been considered merely a figurehead). We say, "Poor fellow, he does his best; he is not free. He suffers like the rest of us, at all the things they make him do." As for the rest, we endure the Vichy government as a creature of the Weisbaden commission, as a consequence of the military defeat of June, 1940. We suffer, we wait, we pray and we hope. For we know the war is not yet ended and that the future is not yet in the hands of Hitler, but still and ever in the hands of God.

#### THEATRES-ON-WHEELS

IN the May 9 COMMONWEAL, the "Inner Forum" was devoted to a new theatrical venture called "God's Stage," which was recently organized by members of the Speech and Drama Department at the Catholic University in Washington, and was especially successful during the past Lent.

Now it appears that we North Americans have been beaten to it by our South American friends, the Argentines, in the caravan theatre technique. An anonymous reader has sent in a copy of "Panorama," issued by the Division of Intellectual Cooperation of the Pan American Union at Washington, in which we find the following paragraphs:

In April 1936 the Teatro Rodante, a theatre-on-wheels designed to perform in the outlying districts, and organized by Raúl González Tuñón, Cordova Iturburu and José Portogalo, opened at the Salón Lasalle with Alvaro Yunque's *Miguel Cantó*, a one-actor about a labor squaler, and with the satiric sketch *Al Gran Pueblo Aborigen, Salud!* by D. Lesau, a devastating criticism of the racist theories of the nazis. The Theatre-on-Wheels' splendid chorus is considered by many critics superior to the acting group.

By 1936 the theatre-on-wheels idea became extremely popular. Already the Agrupación Juan B. Justo had acquired a truck. This organization had been growing by leaps and bounds. It had the only really successful amateur chorus in Argentina, as well as its own orchestra, an open-air theatre, with seats for 400. Its repertoire now included, in addition to O'Neill, Bernard and Vildrac, plays by Descaves, Pirandello and Schnitzler, whose *Anatol* made a great hit. Latin American plays successfully staged were J. Zavala Muñiz' *La Cruz de Los Caminos* and Enrique Agilda's *El Clamor* and *Rumbos*.

### The Stage & Screen

#### The Plays of the Year

THE THEATRICAL season just closed has been far from a banner year, at least as to the new plays produced. Whether it is the war, or just a general drying up of creative power, the year has been bare to an extreme. For this reason the few good things have been doubly welcome. I voted in the meeting of the Drama Critics Circle to give the prize this year to William Saroyan's "The Beautiful People," and I have no apologies to make. "The Beautiful People" may not be the finest of Saroyan's plays, but it is poetic, tender and imaginative. The play that did get the prize, Miss Lillian Hellman's "The Watch on the Rhine," had one good scene, and was up to date in theme, but aside from this I found it dull, talky, inhabited by unreal people and poorly constructed. I shall have to add that twelve of my fellow critics, however, thought it masterly. If there had been a second prize for an American play I should have voted for "Claudia," a very fresh, sensitively written comedy of married life by Rose Francken. "Claudia," too, in its chief protagonist revealed the most original and interesting character of the year. Claudia herself lives and breathes, a little masterpiece of whimsical reality. Miss Francken's play to me is far more real and far more delicately written than Miss Hellman's, even though those who demand social or political meanings may not find it "significant." During the last few seasons "significant" seems to be the pet word of certain of our critics. One of them even condemned Shakespeare for not being "significant." But then "Twelfth Night" will probably be able to survive this castigation!

Of foreign plays there was Emlyn Williams's "The Corn Is Green," a moving, well constructed and written story, if not a particularly original one. But it was honest and deserved the Critics' universal accolade as the best of the year's non-American plays. Two other comedies deserve mention in this category: John Van Druten's witty and human "Old Acquaintance" and Zoe Akins's adaptation from the French of a charming revelation of adolescence, "The Happy Days." Mr. Van Druten's play was a moderate success, but Miss Akins's failed after a run of only two weeks. Probably the greatest popular hit of the year was Joseph Kesselring's farce, "Arsenic and Old Lace," in which murder and insanity are for once made hilariously funny. Another play, half comedy and half farce, about life in Greenwich Village, was a marked



success. It was "My Sister Eileen," by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov, based on *New Yorker* stories by Ruth McKenney. While unimportant and unequal "My Sister Eileen" is funny. A play which was badly treated in the daily press was Paul Vincent Carroll's "The Old Foolishness." While not the equal of "Shadow and Substance" or "The White Steed" it possessed some admirable scenes, and some exquisite writing, writing such as no American playwright has equalled this year. S. N. Behrman, whose comedies are always witty, was not at his best in this year's "The Talley Method." Mr. Behrman evidently had better remain the critical commentator rather than the exhorter. Of the musicals, "The Cabin in the Sky" was the most original, and the first act, at least, really fine. These were the high spots of the season, with the rest mediocrity. Let us hope that next year will bring a richer harvest.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

### Of Mars and the Film

**D**URING THE past year we have seen several cinematic reactions to the present wars and the state of the world. During the next year we are likely to see many more. But one thing Hollywood has learned: audiences do not want depressing war films or horrific anti-Nazi pictures full of concentration camps and suffering. They will accept movies with war background if the leading characters come through it all with a continued sense of humor; and they will accept preparedness and training films loaded with excitement and comedy. So hold on to your hats; we're in for a couple of cycles.

Well pleased with the audience reception accorded to last year's "Arise My Love," in which a reporter and a flier (Colbert and Milland) combined love, adventure, flippancy and tragedy in war-stressed Europe, Paramount now tries the same scheme again. However, "One Night in Lisbon" overdoes its boy-meets-girl theme, exaggerates its characters until they become types, substitutes risqué lines and situations for plot until it loses its modern significance and becomes any cliché-ridden comedy. Its hero and heroine are typical conceptions of an American flier (a

boyish, slangy, frank, daring, mad scamp) and an English girl (a reserved, cultured, courageous-but-inhibited-by-breeding-and-background blonde beauty). From the moment they meet during a bombardment in a London air raid shelter, the pursuit is on; and it continues until the boy gets girl in Lisbon. They have withstood the interference of German bombs, the girl's maid (May Whitty), a conventional, rather stuffy English suitor (John Loder), and the hero's divorced wife (Patricia Morrison) who is dragged in for no other reason than to complicate the plot. Fred MacMurray is the brash, slang-slinging American; as the love-sick but indignant heroine Madeleine Carroll is gorgeous to look upon in evening clothes, negligée or in her chauffeurette's costume. Virginia Van Upp garbled John Van Druten's "There's Always Juliette" to write this screenplay; she might have thought up a better title and a less flimsy excuse for getting her principals to Lisbon. Director Edward H. Griffith made the blitzkrieg in London seem real enough in spite of all the smart talk, but he was unable to do anything with the phony international incidents in Lisbon. Of course the whole thing is pro-British. Lovely Madeleine singing "There'll Always Be an England" is enough to persuade anyone.

More than pleased with the box-office enthusiasm for "Buck Privates," Universal rushed their comedians into another movie about Uncle Sam's men. If you like the Abbott-and-Costello kind of humor, you'll have a rip-roaring time watching the two boys carry on "In the Navy." Whenever they are on the screen, they keep the audience rolling in the aisles (and most of the time I was rolling too). Straightman Bud Abbott feeds the gags to Lou Costello who gets all he can out of the funny lines and ludicrous by-play. They're at their best when Abbott is working his shell game or when Costello is making a fool of himself over mixing a salad-dressing, doing his own brand of arithmetic or starting a fight. They take old-time vaudeville slapstick to a new high. Unfortunately in between their antics are gaps filled in with entertainment of a different sort. Dick Powell, singing again after his recent lapse into drama, impersonates Radio's No. 1 Sensation who escapes from adoring females by enlisting in the navy. He is chased through most of the picture by attractive Claire Dodd who even goes aboard the battleship to snap his picture. And in between the funnymen's fun and the pointless story, the Andrews Sisters sing to give the navy a musical comedy effect. This conglomeration has been directed by Arthur Lubin, as best he could under the circumstances. But Abbott and Costello, and the continued anticipation of their return, makes sitting through the dull spots a pleasure.

Of course serious films about today's wars and world are being made too. March of Time has included in recent presentations, pictures about Australia and Canada, Britain's RAF, the US Army Air Corps, and Navy, and Uncle Sam's work as a non-belligerent. Now, its new issue, "China Fights Back," summarizes the war in China during the past four years. In its usual moving reportorial style, this March of Time shows what China is doing today to fight off Japanese enslavement. Excellent shots of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, the Soong Sisters,

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Chinese soldiers in training and the mobilization of industry in the interior make very real the struggle of these people to preserve their independence. Courage is the dominant note running through the picture—courage and hope of the people of Free China who, though they have lost six million lives, continue to fight against all odds without thought of surrender.

Fortitude is also the message that one sees in the series of films now being run off at the Museum of Modern Art as part of their "Britain at War" exhibition. Fifteen documentary films (five each afternoon) with a distinct flavor of "Chin up" show how the British are carrying on during this war. Made for home consumption, these pictures are used for educational and propaganda purposes to illustrate to one half of a nation how the other half is working and living. They cover such subjects as the laying of a balloon barrage, the use of motorboats in the evacuation from Dunkirk, how civilian man-power is being organized to prevent waste of labor, how farmers are reclaiming grassland to grow food, how welfare work is carried on during war time, how teachers, average housewives, business men and everyday citizens can help. The films are exceedingly well directed, by some new directors and such old reliables as Asquith and Cavalcanti, and reveal many delightful human touches, beautiful photography and vivid imaginative qualities. Since we in America may need to use similar films for our own purposes, it would be well for us to study these fine examples. Without blubbering or growing sentimentally patriotic, these short documentaries have captured the strong, terse understatement of John of Gaunt: "This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England." PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

## Books of the Week

### Liturgical Week

*National Liturgical Week, 1940. Benedictine Liturgical Conference. \$1.50.*

IN "National Liturgical Week, 1940" we have a compilation of the proceedings of the first national meeting in this country devoted to the Liturgy. The holding of this "Week" was an event of high significance in the life of the Church in the United States, and the issuance of this report testifies the earnestness and zeal of all who participated in the ceremonies and deliberations.

The papers and discussions presented during this "Week" deal naturally with the important topic of the Liturgy, and more specifically they centered on the subject of the parish as one of the first elements to be considered in a discussion of Liturgy or public worship. We have consequently a series of formal papers, together with informal discussions upon them touching the subject of parish worship as such, and also the Mass, the Divine Office, devotions, "artistic expression" of parish worship and the living parish.

A review of the volume requires likewise at least a brief review of the Liturgical Conference itself. The first impression one gathers from the proceedings is of some similarity to the sermon against stay-aways preached by the zealous pastor to the congregation present before him. His words really never reach in any great measure their

objective. So in the "Liturgical Week" the zealous attendants heard and participated in talks, discussions and liturgical exercises, the hortatory section of which was unnecessary for those present, while the same might also be said of the didactic. This conference assuredly accomplished great good, though attended by but a woefully small number of participants, while it is to be feared that the volume of proceedings will not receive the wide circulation that it really deserves. Small beginnings, however, are the bases of great enterprises and accomplishments, and we may nurture the hope that as the annual "Week" recurs an increasing interest in the work will be apparent throughout the country. Nevertheless, while congratulating the sponsors and participants in the spirit of the whole proceedings, the small number attending from the environs of Chicago, where the "Week" was held, must be noted as a disappointing feature.

The volume in hand sets forth in a faithful manner the papers and the discussions. The papers are all interesting and authoritative, though perhaps somewhat too much on the scholarly side, if we admit that one of the aims of the movement is to draw into its active scope large numbers of the faithful. The discussions as distinct from the papers, it must be confessed, are in general rather inadequate and almost invariably attenuated and at times even omitted because of schedule difficulties. At times a spontaneous and even warm discussion develops among members of different schools of thought on specific points, but too often the warmth of expression and the incisive and pointed comment is lacking.

While, as indicated, the program centered in general around the parish, the spirituality of the individual was as a very consequence adverted to, and many interesting sidelights were developed. Congregational singing received attention and a certain definite exemplification. Likewise common prayer was participated in by those attending the conference. More interesting still is the section devoted to the Divine Office for the laity.

Congratulations and commendation are due in no small measure to all who made this first Liturgical Week the success that it proved to be. It is to be hoped that each succeeding year will bring forth a companion volume in a series which will constitute a welcome addition to our liturgical library, and that it will be particularly adapted to the faithful who may thus have a definite and concrete source to which to turn for inspiration and instruction. The book has a satisfactory index and is in an attractive format. ✠ GERALD SHAUGHNESSY, S.M.

### BIOGRAPHY

*The Road to the Temple. Susan Glaspell. Stokes. \$2.75.*

THE ORACLE at Delphi, which still speaks to whom so cares to listen, gives Europe till 1941. Europe will then die of Nietzsche's philosophy—as the eagle and lion die, being for themselves alone. Pity their magnificence." This from a note jotted down by George Cram Cook in 1923. He was born on the Mississippi with his roots deep planted in Iowa, where his great-grandfather had come in a prairie schooner in 1836. Davenport, Iowa, is full of Cook memorials, but it was George Cook's mother who saved the original log cabin and had it moved to the bluffs overlooking the river. It was she who wrote to Cook at Harvard, when family finances precluded his first projected voyage to Greece, "I, also, have always longed for the art of the world. . . . But if you cannot go, you will find beauty and art every-

where—under your feet and over your head." After work in Heidelberg and the University of Geneva, Cook taught for a year in the University of Iowa, embellishing a course on the poets of New England with a full background of Italian art. Then without warning, he turned from pedagogy to a Tolstoian farm adventure, and the sudden transition lost him his first wife. When another thwarted romance threatened his nervous balance, he moved to Chicago for a career in literature.

As a girl, Susan Glaspell had watched the handsome young farmer drive his produce to town and had excitedly attended meetings of the Monist Society which was founded by Cook and Floyd Dell as a protest against standardized theology. But unfortunately it was not until after Cook had remarried and was the father of two children that he and Susan discovered each other. They were married in Weehawken in 1913. Together they wrote "Suppressed Desires," the most famous one-act play of the period, and presented it in a friend's house in Greenwich Village where Robert Edmond Jones arranged the lights—lamps and candles! Then John Reed, just back from Mexico, told them about the Miracle Play he had seen produced by a whole community. "One man cannot produce drama," said George Cook. To prove how it could be born of a group, he turned an old fishhouse in his beloved community of Provincetown into the Wharf Theatre. A young Irishman arrived that summer with a trunkful of mss; it was Eugene O'Neill. A few years later, Cook brought Gilpin down from Harlem and gave "The Emperor Jones" to New York in the Provincetown Playhouse in McDougall Street. Broadway took notice and the company began to seek individual careers. "It is time to move to Greece," said Cook to Susan.

He was then forty-eight, but "because the Greeks had left something for him across the blurred centuries, he wanted to walk where their feet had walked and see what their eyes saw"; above all to hear Greek spoken as a living tongue. He found modern Greek even more lustrous, "like a pebble," polished by the seas of time, and believed Greece to be on the brink of her renaissance.

Near the temple of Delphi on the sheltering curve of Parnassos, "Kyrios" and "Kyria Kouk" took up their life with the shepherds. In summer they moved high up the mountain to Kalania, where the whole village camped in the spruce forest and the bells of the flocks tinkled all through the nights. There Cook made friends with a wild bird which followed him back to Delphi, but the shepherd dog he had rescued from a cruel owner developed glanders and infected his master. Just before Kyrios Kouk died, the bird flew in his window. Kyrios Kouk has become a new legend now in Delphi, where the Pythian games have been revived in his memory and where, by order of the Greek Government, one of the ancient stones from the Temple has been placed on his grave.

It is difficult to appraise dispassionately the testament of a wife's devotion but, as might be expected, the second half of the story, which postdates her marriage to George Cook, is far more direct and compelling. For those who knew him, no doubt the whole is luminous but, in compiling from odd scraps of writings her husband's spiritual development, Miss Glaspell has naturally not been as successful as was Henry Adams in tracing his own soul's history. Miss Glaspell's style is more impressionistic than lucid and lacks the force of simplicity. The book is too long, but it does evoke the picture of a tall man with a

shock of white-blue hair "passionate and gentle," deeply loyal, over-generous, intrinsically gay but oppressed with the philosophic doubt of his century. His wife loved everything about him—even his habit of occasionally drinking to excess. One day she saw him driving round Athens on the front seat with the coachman, fluently Greek, with a bottle under his arm. At midnight, he announced he must sleep on the Acropolis. "Sought for a lifetime and still unfound," is the first line of his last poem, "At Fifty I Ask God." Perhaps the bird brought him some message of hope at the end. His friends, the Greeks of Delphi, buried their Kyrios Kouk with all the rites of the Greek Church.

E. V. R. WYATT.

*Catherine of Aragon.* Garrett Mattingly. Little, Brown. \$3.50.

PROFESSOR MATTINGLY'S biography of the first wife of the notorious Henry VIII is the current Literary Guild selection. The book is illustrated and evidences a careful examination of most of the printed histories of the period. Beyond its being written in a style that should offend neither Catholics nor Protestants, there is little that can be said.

Its style is chopped, uneven and over-weighted. It contains about seventy-five percent history as against twenty-five percent "biography." The work never moves; it hesitates at every other paragraph "with insertions typically historical and pedagogic." Most of these re-hash what previous nineteenth century writers have claimed. Despite the publisher's claim of "much new material," there is nowhere strong evidence of much new material.

As every student of the period knows, Catherine has been maligned and forgiven by authors bent upon condemnation or exoneration. Professor Mattingly seems to think that she moulded the destiny of England more than most historians readily believe. She was good, yes; but hers was a weak position, always. To this reviewer the thesis remains unsustained.

The volume begins with the history of "A Spanish Princess," moves forward to the history of "England's Queen," and dies on the unsatisfying note of "The Divorce of Henry VIII." For ten successive days the present reviewer has dipped into the work in the hope of finding something satisfying, interesting or worthwhile. All that he could find was excessive boredom. Without doubt, "Catherine of Aragon" is the example *par excellence* of a dull book club selection. To the best of my knowledge, it breaks all records for excessive dullness. Even the "scholarly bibliography" is dull, as well as uneven and very incomplete. One has only to examine the long description of the works on the life of Henry VIII to realize the excessive dullness, shortsightedness and verbosity, as well as the lack of scholarly acumen on the part of the author.

LOYD WENDELL ESHLEMAN.

#### CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

*Consumers' Cooperatives in the North Central States.* L. C. Kercher, V. W. Kebker, W. G. Leland, Jr. Edited by R. S. Vaile. University of Minnesota. \$3.50.

SOMEWHERE in his penetrating little book on the "Restoration of Property" Hilaire Belloc remarks that the decentralized, self-reliant, well-distributed economy he envisages would perforce be ever unfinished, imperfect, on the way to realization. Mr. Belloc does not make consumers' cooperatives a part of his scheme of human restoration, but his estimate of the imperfections



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of the system he advocated also applies to the cooperatives in our North Central States, so thoroughly investigated by these Michigan and Minnesota professors.

Community after community bears witness to the fact that consumers' cooperation in order to be successful depends directly on the stability of the employment of those who patronize the stores. As a consequence the future is not too bright in areas where extractive industries are due for eventual exhaustion and farms have not been built up to absorb the inhabitants of those areas. On the other hand it was the hard conditions, the difficulty in making ends meet, in mining and lumbering communities that impelled the workers, mostly Finns, to organize their scanty buying power. Cooperatives are so active in those areas because of rude necessity, while in most parts of the United States there is not enough economic pressure or community consciousness to get things started.

Other weaknesses of human nature disclosed by the studies in this highly informative book are the tendency of the original Finnish leaders to perpetuate themselves in power as local governing boards and their failure to develop the leaders that are to succeed them. Hard times are often reflected in the abandonment of a strictly cash policy demanded by orthodox Rochdale principles. Only in the smallest towns do the coops play an important rôle in the life of the community; elsewhere it is in the minds of local residents hardly more than another store. There were few instances where an active membership imbued with the cooperative ideal was working up a constructive social program. The viewpoint of the investigators is highly realistic.

Yet, for all these handicaps and personal shortcomings, the record of these American Midwest coops is not unimpressive. Growth has been steady, mistakes have been corrected, financial positions have improved and the organization of wholesalers has proceeded apace. Most of the communities studied have allotted sizable sums for educational work. Considering the inadequate capital with which they started, the bad times of the past decades, the uncertainty of the workers' occupations and the opposition they have had to overcome, these people have recorded a genuine social achievement.

In sum this informative compendium of theory and example is a meaty sandwich with Professor Kercher's more general "The Regulative Accomplishments and Possibilities of Consumers' Cooperatives in the Present Economy" placed between the analysis of the Finnish-initiated movement there and case studies of retail and wholesale coops in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. By dint of repetition the reader gets a real grasp of such important cooperative elements as membership, finance, credit, dividends, education, relationship to the wholesale, range of goods and services etc. It is a painstaking job well done.

EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

#### FICTION

*The Transposed Heads, a Legend of India.* Thomas Mann. Knopf. \$2.00.

THOMAS MANN, whose fame rests almost equally upon his short novels, like "Death in Venice" and "Tonio Kröger," as upon such monumental works as "The Magic Mountain" and "Joseph and His Brethren," again uses the slighter instrument, this time his setting being an indefinitely ancient India. He wisely avoids the apparatus of portentous archeology and contents himself with the simplest of drop-scenes. Even so one suspects that he has

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"got up" his India out of the handbooks. There is cer-  
tainly no indication that he has ever been there, unless as  
a tourist. His Indians therefore are really only Germans  
in disguise, just as his turn of fancy and his humor are  
also rather heavily Teutonic, even if he is, as always, an  
artist. Such specific details as are employed are sufficiently  
correct. He is careful not to use too many of them, lest  
he go astray. That he does not enter into the Indian mind  
is of slight consequence: the setting is merely a matter of  
convenience, the psychology is intended to be universal  
rather than distinctive. As for the writing, it is as usual  
highly mannered, and the translator, Mr. Lowe-Porter,  
has added mannerisms of his own, especially in the matter  
of alliteration. As usual, too, Mr. Mann harps a little  
too much on a single string. But there can be no doubt  
about his charm.

The story is about two friends, the burly Nanda and  
the slightly-built, more intellectual Shridaman, and their  
love for the beautiful Sita. Shridaman marries her and she  
loves him though, only half-satisfied, she dreams of her-  
self in the arms of Nanda. Knowing this, the husband  
goes one day into a shrine of Kali and decapitates himself,  
leaving his friend and wife outside. When Nanda goes  
in to see what becomes of him and finds his body, he also  
decapitates himself, lest he be accused of murder. And  
then Sita, unable to cut her head off, is about to hang her-  
self when the goddess Kali appears and offers to work a  
miracle. The wife is to rejoin the heads to the bodies.

But Sita makes a mistake—one supposes out of uncon-  
scious design—so that the heads are transposed. Now the  
question arises: whose wife is she? Shridaman's body is  
the father of the child she already carries; but a holy man  
decides in favor of the head as the center of personality,  
so Nanda's powerful body (with the head of Shridaman)  
gets her, while the body of Shridaman (with the head of  
Nanda) goes off to the life of contemplation in a forest.  
It seemed a happy solution that Sita could combine her  
love for her husband's dear head with the delirious del-  
ights his friend's so much stronger body could awake in  
her.

In the end, however, that palls. When her child is  
four, and after Shridaman's intellectual head exercises its  
influence over a body that gradually grows flabby—the  
body at the same time bringing some degeneration to the  
mind—Sita goes off to find Nanda. After a day and a  
night with him, Shridaman arrives. They agree that,  
polyandry being out of the question, the only way out is  
that friend kill friend and that Sita perform suttee on  
their pyre. The child, made illustrious by such a mother,  
ends in fine garments as reader to the King of Benares.

There are probably several parables aimed at: the con-  
flict between the life of the senses and the life of the  
intellect being the most obvious. As so often with Thomas  
Mann, a streak of callousness appears. His story is more  
convincing as a study in logic and mathematics than as a  
study in human nature. However, his literary virtuosity  
is so great that the reader is not likely to cavil. Once  
again the Aristotelian dictum about the impossible-prob-  
able is justified: the preposterous is made plausible.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

My Dear Bella. Arthur Kober. Random House. \$2.00

**T**HUNDER over the Bronx again! These tales of  
Pa Gross, the none-too-patient breadwinner, Bella,  
the socially aspirant, and Ma, the loud and indomitable,  
are well-known to readers of the *New Yorker* as among



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the truest and most amiable characterizations of New York Jewish life which have appeared in recent years. They are more subtle than Potash and Perlmutter and much truer; funny as they are, their fundamental purpose is to obtain sympathy and understanding for our fellow-citizens in the borough to the north. Pa and Ma and Bella, Mac Fine, Monroe Rosenblatt, Doc Rappaport (that stinker, as Jennie Gershkorn called him) are real people; they are neither persecuted saints nor humorless money-grubbers. If the present set of sketches seems to lack something of the interest of "Thunder Over the Bronx," it is perhaps owing to familiarity; certainly Mr. Kober has lost none of his skill in getting down on paper the exact nuances of the Bronx accent, nor has he failed to transmit with full effect the ironic bite of Bronx humor.

The drawings by Hoff which illustrate the book are excellent. Perhaps the most hilarious scene is the one in which Mr. Philip Rudnick, the "boss painter," calls to redecorate the Gross apartment. J. G. E. HOPKINS.

#### BRIEFERS

*Marian Anderson. Kosti Vehanen. Whittlesey. \$2.50.*

**T**HIS BOOK, written by Miss Anderson's accompanist, presents a tender picture of an unusual relationship. But it is primarily Kosti Vehanen's memory of ten years and only a distant view of Marian Anderson. It is a pleasant, simple recounting of what they saw and what they did from the time of their earliest engagements in his native Finland until the historic concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and it does not quite manage to capture the qualities that uniquely distinguish Miss Anderson as a singer or even as a person. Perhaps Mr. Vehanen himself feels this for he writes: "Marian's heart is a little gold casket that it is extremely difficult to open. . . . She guards it carefully in order, one feels, that no living being can come near enough to disturb the great calmness of her soul."

*The Time Is Now. Pierre van Paassen. Dial. \$1.00.*

**A**N IMPASSIONED little book of the pamphleteering type that sets out to describe the nazi plan for world domination, the "war of the oceans" planned for years by Dr. Haushofer and the Berlin Geopolitical Institute. To forestall this plan to take over the coastlines of Africa, Asia and South America—a plan which van Paassen sees gradually unfolding with deadly precision—the author recommends not only our immediate seizure of the Cape Verde and Canary Islands and Dakar, but also the sending of an American expeditionary force to India now, to prevent the scheduled nazi-soviet march on that land of 350,000,000.

*Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. W. F. Bryan, General Editor; Germaine Dempster, Assistant General Editor. Chicago. \$10.00.*

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO is more and more assuming the character of the world's leading center for Chaucerian studies. This latest volume, intended as a supplement to previously existing collections of the same sort which the years have made incomplete, represents the joint work of a galaxy of specialists. It is, of course, primarily intended for students and for other experts, yet it can be made to serve a wider purpose. For it reflects the literary tone of Chaucer's time, and thereby makes his own genius all the more obvious.

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## Next Week

**INTRODUCTION TO LATIN AMERICA**, by Clarence Finlayson, noted Chilean scholar now teaching at the University of Notre Dame, is an important survey of leading aspects of life in the Americas to the south of us. If Pan-Americanism is to be something more than a flowery term, we in the United States must have some idea of our neighbors' outlook on life, their problems and their aspirations. Professor Finlayson takes up such important matters as barriers to mutual understanding, the social system, education, revolutions and dictatorships, novelists and Pan-Americanism.

**THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR**, by Wilfrid Parsons, S.J., of the Catholic University, is an analysis of the philosophical position of the conscientious objector. Father Parsons says, "There is nothing in the teaching of the Catholic Church which states that the citizen is exempt from the obligation of bearing arms in a war as such, regardless of whether it is just or unjust. Here is a fundamental duty."

**VISION ON THE FARM**, by Eva Smith, of the Catholic Worker Farm in Easton, Pa., describes a movement she knows first-hand. "We are not only going to take care of our woods and plant trees wherever it seems necessary and grow food for ourselves and the many poor people that come to spend their weekends or their summer with us, but we are also showing a way out of the hopeless situation which will arise after the war-production boom ends and the people are unemployed again." A number of the workers on this farm have given up well-paid jobs to carry on this program and they hope that the local draft board will appreciate the value of what they are doing.

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## The Inner Forum

**THE CATHOLIC** Summer School at Cliff Haven, near Plattsburg on Lake Champlain, will observe its fiftieth year with a Golden Jubilee program which has been planned for the 1941 session, commencing in July. At its inception the school was blessed by Leo XIII.

The Golden Jubilee session will be dedicated "to a continuous series of fervent thanksgivings for the blessings showered upon the institution during the eventful fifty years of its existence and in supplication of another half century of usefulness in the field of Catholic Action."

Members of the hierarchy have consented to celebrate each week the Pontifical Masses of gratitude which will be sung in the chapel of Our Lady of the Lake. The first of these Masses will be celebrated on July 6 by Bishop Monaghan of Ogdensburg, New York, and Monsignor Michael J. Splaine, president of the Summer School, will preach the opening sermon.

The most important festival of the session will take place on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption, when temporal activities cease, and everyone participates in a day of recollection. A special altar is to be erected on the grounds, and here Mass will be sung in the morning. In the afternoon all participants join in a procession to the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin, which is located in a pine grove on the shores of Lake Champlain. Archbishop Spellman will preside at the Mass, and during Benediction and the procession to the shrine, Bishop Stephen J. Donahue will officiate. The sermon in the morning will be given by Rev. John S. Middleton of St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N. Y., who will also be in charge of the Triduum in preparation for the feast.

Last year the Catholic University made its first appearance on the campus of the Summer School, when it gave courses for graduate as well as undergraduate students. The attendance was so encouraging that Dr. Roy J. Deferrari, its Secretary General, has decided to enlarge the schedule for the coming season. Arrangements have been made to give twenty-one courses in various fields including Education, English, History, Philosophy, Psychology, Economics and Mental Hygiene. The final week of the lecture series (August 25 to 29) will be devoted almost entirely to sacred music and prayer.

### CONTRIBUTORS

**John J. O'CONNOR** teaches at St. John's University, Brooklyn, and was formerly managing editor, is now a contributing editor, of THE COMMONWEAL.

**Liam O'CONNOR** is an instructor in psychology at Hunter College, and has also taught at Fordham and Georgetown Universities. His work has been published by newspaper syndicates, experimental magazines and *The New Yorker*.

**Rev. Leo R. WARD, C.S.C.**, teaches at Notre Dame University. He is the author of "God in an Irish Kitchen" and "Holding Up the Hills."

**The Most Rev. Gerald SHAUGHNESSY, S.M.**, is Bishop of Seattle, Washington.

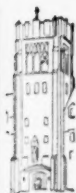
**Euphemia Van Rensselaer WYATT** is the dramatic critic of *The Catholic World*.

**Lloyd Wendell ESHLEMAN** is a reviewer for the press and for learned periodicals and the author of a volume of Renaissance lives and times entitled "Moulders of Destiny" and of "A Victorian Rebel: the Life of William Morris." He lectures at the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute.

**Theodore MAYNARD** is a poet, lecturer, critic and author. His most recent volume was a biography of Queen Elizabeth.

**J. G. E. HOPKINS** teaches and writes for the popular magazines.





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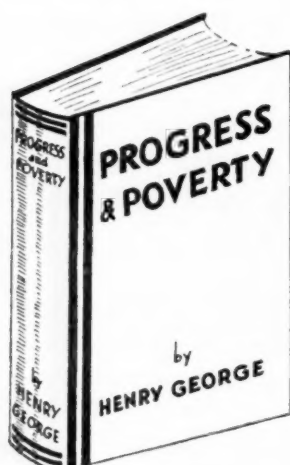
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